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The California Railway Museum is open weekends. Come ride the Streetcars. Also a complete Railroad Book Store. Highway 12, 10 miles east of Fairfield, California.

WRITE Amtrak president Roger Lewis NOW urging re-instatement of Oakland-L.A. overnight service. Oakland-Barstow-L.A. using thru sleepers cut into westbound SUPER CHIEF could work. (A paid advertisement.)

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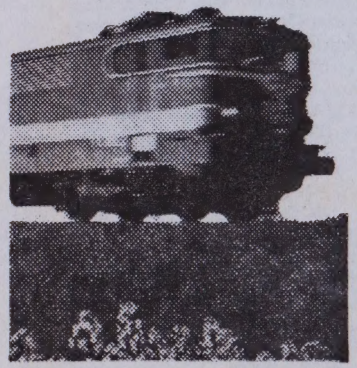

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RAIL TRAVEL

Vol. 1 No. 25
December 6, 1971

newsletter

One year of RTN

RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER ONE YEAR LATER

Just one year ago the first issue of Rail Travel Newsletter appeared. After two dozen issues, it is time to pause and consider where we have come, where we are, and where we are going. And just what is our philosophy behind our concern for rail travel?

the mechanical newsletter

The December 7, 1970 issue of RTN was eight pages long, entirely mimeographed except for the multilithed outer covers. It was mailed by first class mail at 6¢ an ounce to a very small group of charter subscribers. Now RTN has doubled in size and more than quadrupled in verbal content. It is now mailed by first class mail at 8¢ an ounce to about 17 times as many subscribers spread over the entire United States including Hawaii and Alaska and in Canada. It is entirely printed by multilith offset and carries a sprinkling of halftone and silkscreen photographs and line drawings. It has attracted a small but devoted staff (listed below) who reside in Northern and Southern California and Virginia. Complimentary copies of each issue are sent to major rail publications, to NARP, and to Amtrak officials. While our readership is still small by comparison with other publications, we are proud to say that RTN is read by the majority of the most influential Americans concerned with rail travel.

the successful newsletter

The success of RTN so far is due largely to you, the reader. We are most grateful for the tremendous response you've given. In each mail we receive news items, comments and ideas, and especially enthusiastic words of praise that really keep us going. After one year of experience as an editor, we can really appreciate the influence that even one convincing letter can have upon another individual, be he editor, politician, or whatnot. Letter writers, take notice!

We are frequently deeply touched by readers who tell us they can't wait the two weeks or so between issues, and who when an issue is late in appearing are quick to write inquiring whether we may have gone out of business.

We wish we had the time to answer each letter individually, but we simply can't. But as Amtrak has said, we do read each letter carefully; and like Amtrak, we rarely respond. We are not about to go out of business, thanks to you. Your continued financial support in the form of renewals, gift subscriptions, back issue sales (which we again must apologize for our slowness in filling), are managing to keep us solvent. And, oh yes, your advertising. We are deeply grateful for them.

the inquiring newsletter

At this time we'd like to formally ask you, the reader, to let us have your ideas about the future of RTN. We've received many ideas already, and some of them have been incorporated into the newsletter. But by and large we've followed our own whims in putting it together. Now as this undertaking gets larger by the day, we need to make some

(SEE P. 15)

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol 1, No 25, December 6, 1971. Published twice monthly, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, by Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley, Calif. 94709. Subscription $4.00 a year; 25¢ a copy.

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Michael Cohen, Artist

THE TRANSPORTATION WAR HEATS UP

In one of those largely behind-the-scenes series of battles of which the majority of citizens are only dimly aware, but which will intimately affect their lives for decades to come, the highways versus trains proponents are fighting skirmishes that surface mainly as highly conflicting statements in the media.

For example, Louis Menk, head of Burlington Northern and a board member of Amtrak, has told Forbes Magazine that "The long-distance passenger train is in the same position now as the stage-coach was to railroading; it is time to let it die an honorable death."

On the other hand, the National Association of Railroad Passengers in its December newsletter editorial, countered with the charge that Mr. Menk is "helping to kill it." Since the existence of Amtrak saves the freight-hauling railroads money, NARP made the point that "Any improvements that can be made in the context of passenger service are bound to benefit freight service" as well. NARP suggested that other railroads call Mr. Menk and "politely ask him to shut up."

American consumer representatives are up in arms over the fact that the consumer position on Amtrak's board has never been filled, while at the same time Amtrak directors like Mr. Menk are making statements which seem contrary to the aims of Amtrak, and are at odds with the growing surge of sentiment for pushing passenger train service as an alternative to crowded highways and airports.

Meanwhile those who jealously guard the coffers of the highway-oil-auto riches seem to be running scared. More pressure than ever before is being brought to bear upon Congress to break the highway monopoly and do something about pollution, congestion, destruction of land resources, and the shocking death rate on the road.

One such guardian of the highway pursestrings is the wealthy Hearst newspaper chain. In its premier paper, the San Francisco Examiner, it proclaimed (Nov. 28) in an editorial that "The Examiner and other Hearst Newspapers have a particular interest in the Highway Trust Fund. We spearheaded the national campaign that led to the passage in 1956 of the Federal Aid Highway Act establishing the fund." While the paper admitted that highway people have made some mistakes, it defended the Trust Fund. It pointed out that the Interstate highways have been a "boon to the nation's economy" and have "saved thousands of lives."

But others point out that a boon in one segment of the economy is a bust in another, and that the alleged safety of Interstate highways may be highly over-estimated, since their construction stimulates more auto use on every type of road and may actually be an important contributor to the skyrocketing auto death rate since the early 1960s.

The head of General Motors, James Roche, retiring at the end of this year, spoke with a Wall Street Journal reporter this month about problems revolving about the automobile. Defending the auto crash rate, Roche pointed out that Germany, Italy, Japan and England have worse safety records than that of the U.S. He felt that mass transit will grow and will complement the auto. But he believes that the American is still in love with the car and "would give up about anything before he gives up his automobile."

But there is much evidence that defenders of the highway octopus are privately greatly concerned by the mounting citizen push for a change in transportation priorities. The Federal Highway Administration has estimated that the government will spend $21.8 billion on highways in 1972. But influential Life Magazine in an important editorial (see QUOTES, p. 12) directly pitted passenger trains against "blacktopping the entire nation" with highways and airports. It defended Amtrak and argued that killing it off now would be "disastrous."

It seems probable that Amtrak will get from Congress the money it has requested. The Senate committee conducting the initial hearings has approved the request and the full Senate will vote on it later.

But the amount involved is small, and is just a drop in the bucket compared to the subsidies highways and airports are still receiving. The war over transportation priorities is still building up and promises to be one of the important transportation battles of the century.

LUXURY TRAIN SERVICE DEAD: ROGER LEWIS

"The palatial passenger train service Americans enjoyed in the 1920s or even in the 1940s never is coming back. Service is going to have to be tailored to specific markets and those markets will have to be sold by hard work." This is the viewpoint Amtrak president Roger Lewis gave to reporters late in November.

"We have about the worst passenger train service, nationally speaking, in the civilized world" he continued. "But if you give Americans a convenient, comfortable, safe and reasonably priced alternative to driving their own cars or flying, you can lure a lot of people back to the trains. Moreover, you can do it without hurting the airlines or the buses because most of the new passengers will be persons who presently drive their own cars on the ever more jammed highways."

He stated that it would not be necessary to nationalize the railroads to get their cooperation in making Amtrak successful. "...we're getting excellent cooperation from the railroads. They want to see us succeed."

AMTRAK HOSTESSES TRAINED BY AIRLINE

Last week 24 young ladies began a course under Continental Airlines to groom them for the work of hostesses on Amtrak trains. A 2-week course in Los Angeles prepares them for properly relating to rail passengers to make travel more pleasant. In all, about 150 hostesses will take the course, in addition to about 1100 other railroad employees. Under a one-year contract, Continental will train conductors, porters, redcaps, dining car personnel and uniformed guards. For them, 3-day courses in the East will be held.

Of the 24 hostesses, nine have worked in that capacity with SCL. Others include Hugh Hefner's former social secretary, several registered nurses and former models. Two hold master's degrees in psychology and sociology.

The hostesses will initially be on trains mostly in the Northeast Corridor, where Amtrak is concentrating its major efforts. But they will periodically change routes, and will be stationed in major cities over the nation. Preparatory to the course, the girls, ranging in age from 20 to 27, rode the rails for at least a month to familiarize themselves with contemporary railroading.

AMTRAK THREATENS TO DISCONTINUE THE LAKE SHORE

If the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois don't come through with their legal share (two-thirds) of the losses of Amtrak train 60-61 by January 5, Roger Lewis announced in letters to the governors of the five states this week, Amtrak will discontinue the New York-Chicago via Cleveland train. After nearly seven months of operation, none of the states has anted up its portion of the costs.

East Coast Report by Steve Farrar

NEW YORK-BOSTON run was chosen by Amtrak and DOT for a six-month fare and service experiment. Effective Nov. 30 the 1-way coach fare from N.Y. to Providence, Worcester and Boston was cut to $9.90--reportedly lower than bus fare--and 29 SCL coaches were introduced into New England service. However, a few days later Greyhound advertised in N.Y. a $9.65 "non-stop shuttle" to Boston leaving on the hour each hour 8am to 7pm for a trip of "as little as 4 hours, 15 minutes." That's 31 mins slower than the Turbo, and 10 mins faster than the fastest conventional train time.

IMPROVEMENTS like this in Northeast Corridor travel cannot come too fast. Because of the poor pre-Nov. 14 PC service, 3 Hartford insurance companies are running a chartered bus for their executives to N.Y. each weekday. They started it because the trains were sometimes crowded, not so clean, and required a change of trains in New Haven.

PASSENGER SERVICES Dept. of C&O/B&O was disbanded Nov. 1, and its functions transferred to the Operating Dept. The Ass't VP-Transportation became Amtrak Operations Officer. There is a Manager-Amtrak Operations under him. B&O commuter service will be handled by another individual. Lake Michigan ferries will be handled by the Northern Region. The "District Mgr. Pass. Sales & Serv." rotates between offices in D.C. and Newport News. Food service continues to be handled out of the C&O Food Services Dept., Ashland KY.

AMTRAKING HOME FOR THANKSGIVING. (Our thanks to Tom Dixon, editor of C&O HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER (Box 417, Alderson WV 24910) for most info in this story.) On Nov. 26 C&O 99 left on time as usual from the ancient trainshed of Main St. Station in Richmond. About 10 passengers were aboard, and the consist was: C&O Geep, B&O baggage-tavern, GN Big Sky Blue dome coach. West of Charlottesville, dinner was served until 9:30 pm in the diner from Boston. The food was excellent--ham, potatoes, rolls, iced tea, pumpkin pie--$2.75. At this point the consist was B&O E unit, sleeper, diner, coach, & dome coach. As the dome seats faced backwards (cars are not turned at Newport News) and the dome lights were out, the night view of Blue Ridge and North mountains was fine. A baggageman was aboard the sleeper working baggage at each stop, keeping it in a roomette. Arrival was on time at White Sulphur Springs.....Return east was on Sunday, Nov. 28. About 30 people were waiting for the GEORGE at White Sulphur Springs. Then about 40 more passengers rolled down the hill in limousines from the Greenbriar, C&O's luxury ($75 a day) resort hotel. And then the Greenbriar truck with baggage. The train arrived 1hr late and consisted of B&O E unit, C&O coach, PC coach, UP leg-rest coach, C&O diner, UP sleeper, and C&O office car 25. Loading at the Springs took 15 minutes. Passengers were again picked up at Clifton Forge and Staunton, resulting in approximately 230 coach passengers on a train with 154 coach seats. After seating people in restrooms, the diner and the UP coach lounge, there were still many standees. Much grumbling. When passengers were advised to "write Amtrak," it became clear that few were aware of Amtrak except by name and were only very distantly cognizant of what it was all about.

Going up North Mountain east of Clifton Forge, C&O 50 was down to about 15mph in 60mph territory because one of the two E units had an engine failure. At Charlottesville an SCL and C&O coach were added to the Boston section of the train, as well as a working E unit. A Geep, the C&O coach, B&O baggage-tavern, and the C&O office car made up #98 for Newport News. All had seats leaving Charlottesville. One passenger was ticketed for Norfolk, but was in the diner on the Boston train. No. 50 had to let him off in Gordonsville for No. 98 to pick him up, further delaying both trains. No. 98 left Richmond 1hr 40min late--as usual--with the office car being dropped there. It ran on the wrong main for about 50 miles, resulting in a 50mph speed limit instead of 79.

A coal train was on the eastbound track. Speed was resumed after leaving automatic block territory for CTC, arriving Newport News 1hr 45 min late, just in time for the crew to return west on 99.

FAST FLYING VIRGINIAN'S name made it into the Nov. OFFICIAL GUIDE—in Southern's entry showing connecting service with C&O/Amtrak.....CANADIAN National's Detroit-Windsor "school" buses have been dropped. They connected with TEMPO trains. When are CN & Amtrak going to run Chicago-Toronto trains via PC's Detroit River tunnel? The addition of 10 route-miles would greatly increase revenue for both. Incidentally, CN is now running thru RAPIDOS Windsor-Montreal, eliminating change of trains in Toronto.....Ringling Bros. circus reportedly has purchased some B&O slumbercoaches..... Despite efforts of Sen. Spong and the American Legion, Amtrak has stated that no equipment availability for the Richmond Santa Claus trains could be made until one week before the trains were to run. Which is too late to hire Santa, clowns, musicians; buy balloons and candy; and sell 10,000 tickets....

ECR MINI-EDITORIAL: When is Amtrak going to re-establish some of those grand old train names—names that suggest speed, power and faraway places—names like DIXIE FLYER, SUNSHINE SPECIAL, ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL, WABASH CANNONBALL, FAST FLYING VIRGINIAN?

ADEQUACY RULES FOR PASSENGER TRAINS PROPOSED

The famous adequacies case which occupied the ICC from 1966 until 1969, brought about by the SP's efforts to cut service on the SUNSET (see RTN #23), ended with the decision that the ICC could not set standards of passenger service, but wanted Congress to give it the power.

The ICC got the power when the law setting up Amtrak was passed last year. This month, the Commission proposed a set of rules for railroads—both Amtrak members and non-members—that would aim to insure adequate passenger service on existing trains.

Requirements of the rules would be:

1) A nation-wide toll-free reservation system and information service should operate around the clock.

2) If reserved accommodations are unavailable, the passenger should receive better accommodations than ordered, or else a refund and lesser accommodations, or a refund with a monetary bonus.

3) Confirmation of reservations must be made within one hour.

4) Trains must leave within 15 minutes of scheduled time and arrive no later than 15 minutes late for each 500 miles traveled.

5) Passenger trains have precedence over freights except in emergencies.

6) Connections must be reasonable, without long layovers.

7) Stations must be clean, properly heated and lighted, be equipped with telephones and train information, and be open at convenient hours.

8) Sleepers, diners, coaches, lounges, parlor and dome cars must be provided "in sufficient numbers to meet the travel demands of the public, including periods of predictable peak demands."

9) Food and beverages must be provided on runs of 3 or more hours, and full diners on runs over 12 hours, with certain exceptions.

10) Heating and air conditioning must be functional on trains.

11) Sleepers must be provided on overnight runs.

12) Passengers must pay penalties for non-cancellation of unused reservations.

Amtrak and the railroads have until Jan. 6 to comment on the rules before they take effect. They would have the effect of making Amtrak's job of enforcing railroads' operational standards easier.

KEEPING TRACK

...with Paul Rayton

(A regular RTN feature. Each issue presents another review-critique of a selected pre-Amtrak train.)

Welcome aboard the

SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF

Date: March 11, 1971

In an era when rail passenger service was generally discontinuance after cutback after cutback after cutback, it was a real treat to board the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF. It was equipped with Santa Fe's unique Hi-Level coaches (quiet; spacious; carpets on the floor; Indian-Western decor). And a full-length dome car. And a lounge (below the dome). And a full dining car. And sleeping car(s). Let's look inside the equipment for the rest of the story.

We were headed from Los Angeles to San Francisco via the roundabout route, the EL CAPITAN to Barstow, where we would transfer to the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF.

As luck would have it, the EL CAP was delayed ascending Cajon Pass behind a bad order freight, and when we cleared the delay we were no less than 55 minutes late. The Barstow transfer meant a layover of 45 minutes, so we were in danger of missing our connection. (This circuitous connection was not officially guaranteed in the timetable.)

The Conductor knew we wanted to make the connection and radioed to Barstow to hold the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF for us, which was done. When we got out of Barstow, at 12:30am, the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF was 35 minutes late.

We had not made sleeping car reservations, and thus found the sleeping car full, with the exception of one roomette. Or, they told us, we could get a bedroom after Bakersfield. (Note that they did not tell us simply "sold out" and let it go at that.)

The idea of two in a roomette was not worth considering, and the bedroom at Bakersfield, tho tempting, we passed up too. Soon after Bakersfield it would be getting light and we wanted to get as much viewing from the dome car as possible. So we decided to "coach it."

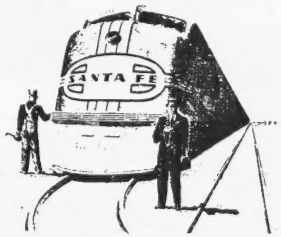
Waiting on our seat was a small brochure headed "Welcome aboard the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF." It contained a timetable, brief descriptions of points of interest, explained how to operate the coach seats and generally tried to make us feel at home on the train. A little touch, but what an impression it makes. "They care!" you felt.

Meanwhile we had left Barstow and headed out into the desert. My wife and I moved back to the darkened dome car to watch the twinkling lights of the desert night. Stars overhead shone down, and the moon gave enough light to read a timetable. When we reached the next stop, Mojave, we had recouped 20 minutes of our lateness.

After Mojave, where we joined the Santa Fe/Southern Pacific joint trackage, we started to climb the Tehachapi Mountains. Even (or especially) now in the middle of the night there were many freight trains moving across the mountains.

From the dome car it was hard to see the opposing trains coming toward us, thanks to the custom of dimming headlights for opposing trains. But we would really know it when the trains passed! The throbbing roar of the mighty diesels rumbled through the glass of the dome and then moved on, one unit at a time.

This would be followed by a long, silent procession of boxcars, each one different, obediently trailing the engines up (or down) the grade. Car after car mysteriously slipped by in the dark. In



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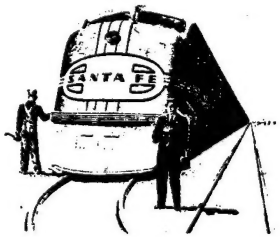


the dome we rode softly, comfortably, peaceful in this coexistence with the massive freights rolling outside.

Without the warmth of sunlight to offset the air conditioning, it was a bit cool in the dome. After a spell my wife decided to head for the coach and rest a bit, whereas I couldn't drag myself out of the dome for a long time.

The moon was still out, its eerie mountain intensity lending a jagged, chalky appearance to the rocky terrain. Up at the front end of the train, two powerful (3600hp) FP-45 engines (designed and painted for passenger service exclusively) led us along a precipitous cliff edge.

I could see the condensed beams of the headlights, one pointing ahead, the other pulsing regularly as it rotated. They carefully charted our course through the treacherous hills and rocks. It was warm, reassuring to see them glowing up there, and the occasional sparkle from the stainless steel cars, spots of life out here in the middle of nowhere.

I'm sure that the nighttime illumination was responsible for the deep appearance of a canyon we saw—or was it? I was not exactly familiar with the route and kept looking for the famous "loop." Finally I asked a Brakeman where it was and found out that we'd passed it some time ago. With that news I decided to quit the sightseeing and rest for a while myself.

Just before Bakersfield the ATSF/SP joint trackage ends. The two companies thus maintained separate passenger stations in the one town. (How to add to your passenger deficit, among other things.)

We pulled into the Santa Fe Bakersfield station about 5 minutes late. Bakersfield is a crew-change point, and we got a new Conductor. Much to my ire, this new Conductor felt it necessary to turn on the lights in the coach to check everybody's tickets. I was really upset by that move, as he had a flashlight which would have worked equally well. It was 3:40am and this superfluous interruption was crude and startling. I chalked it up to an aged Conductor who needed more Vitamin A than he was getting.

Out from Bakersfield then, and out into the San Joaquin Valley. For about the first 100 miles we would be running somewhat west of the SP route. It would be dark during this first part, so I catnapped in our coach seat until dawn.

I was again looking out the window before we came into Fresno at 5:40am. We had made the intervening 110 miles, with four station stops, in under two hours, calling for top speeds well above the overall average of 56mph. And we were back on time.

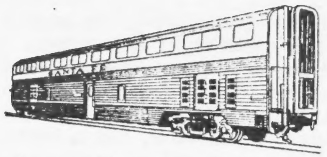
Fresno was another place with service by both Santa Fe and the SP--and separate stations. It was here that we would cross their route; for the rest of the valley trip we would be to the east of the SP.

Leaving town on the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF, we were able to lay to rest that old saw about traveling by train to "see the backyards of America." Here in Fresno the tracks ran right down the middle of Diana Street, with nice residential homes on either side of the train. Neat front yards, picket fences, and the cars of a few early risers starting their activities of the day were there, keeping us company in those early morning hours.

As we left the city we headed across the San Joaquin and the Fresno Rivers, full of snow-melt water running down from the Sierras. Unable to wait any longer, and anxious to get 100% utilization of the magnificent dome car, I was soon sitting up there, watching the sun rise out of a cloud bank.

In the clear early morning air I was treated to a natural light show like no other. The sun was not high enough to illuminate the cirrus clouds above us; its rays were angling in on us through a break in the low clouds to the east.

All around were endless fruit orchards, every tree in full bloom with millions of white flowers. The early sunlight brought the flowers to a radiant brilliance, while the clouds high above us remained dark with the cloak of night. We sped along and I marveled at the early morning cosmodrome. Our dome cast a fleeting shadow of itself on nearby fruit trees. We were rolling across an Impressionist's landscape.



Every seat is on the scenic HI-LEVEL

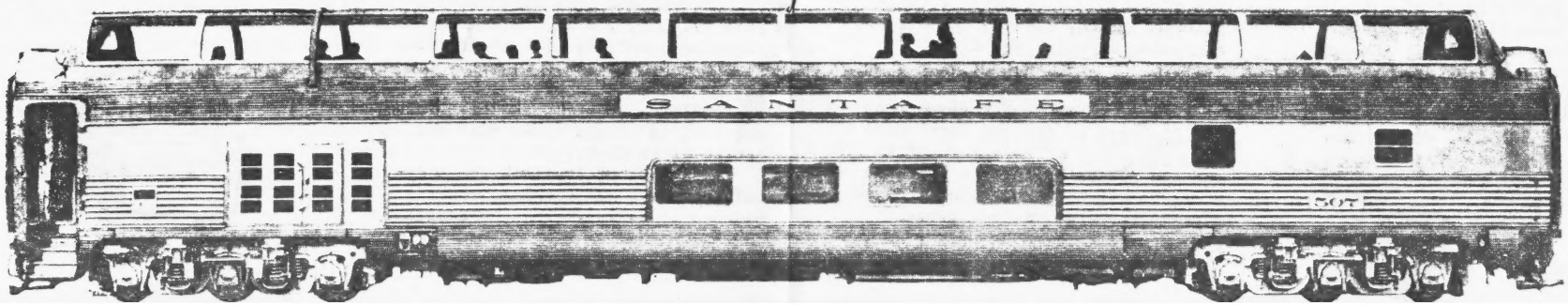
The crew were awake and in the dining car by 6:00, but breakfast wouldn't be served until 7:00. "We used to open earlier, but the company cut down our hours a bit," apologized a waiter. By 7:00 everyone was hungry and I suggested to Peggy that we wait a bit until some of the others had been taken care of.

While waiting, we went to the end of the train, through the sleeping car, and stood at the back door watching the morning sun reflect golden ribbons off the rails. Every now and then we'd make a big, arcing turn and the golden ribbons would shift color and form, go dark under a bridge, then re-appear.

We stood there a long time. Watch in hand, I noticed mileposts whipping by every 40 seconds. That's 90mph, a most respectable speed. The thrill of fast running on those golden rails was exciting. Who says you need Metroliners to go fast? They don't have diners or domes.

I gloated smugly to myself as we passed automobiles, leaving them far behind. It'd take some doing to keep up with us!

I gloated some more as we sat down in the dining car for breakfast. The car was completely equipped, right down to fresh yellow roses on the table—which was itself properly set up with white linen tablecloth and napkins.



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The eggs were excellent, garnished with parsley, and served while still hot on the plate. A cook can get away with a lot of things when making scrambled eggs; accordingly I was most happy that these did not come to me all dripping greasy fat as is so often the case. Here they were still taking pains to serve a pleasing and good breakfast.

Our window view showed us to be in a vast irrigated valley. Occasional transverse canals outlined green fields; the water in them was so high it seemed the fields were in imminent danger of being flooded.

The crew were starting to close up after their run from Chicago. They let us sit there a few more minutes with our coffee and tea, while I made several other observations about the dining car: tables set up in the more convenient 2/4 seating arrangement; butter served on small, stainless steel pats (at least not wrapped in that paper that so often confounds); and curtains on the walls with an interesting Indian design sewn into the fabric. I wondered if this dining car had run on THE CHIEF, or perhaps seen the rim of the Grand Canyon...?

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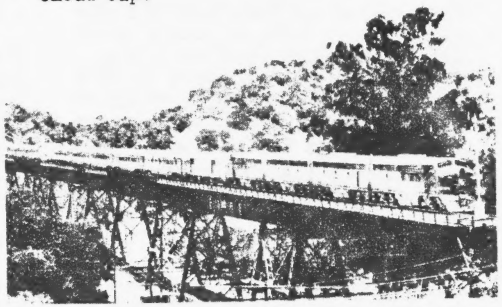

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We were less than an hour away from the rail terminal of Richmond. We stopped briefly at the town of Pittsburg, and then moved out again into wet, grassy flatlands. Somewhere in this area we once again crossed the SP rails, and we often could see their tracks, less than 100 yards distant.

The track for our trip had been mostly worth a grade of B-. It was somewhat rougher (C-) during the latter part of the journey, annoying because it came right at breakfast time. It might have something to do with the swampy grounds of the northern reaches of the valley.

The Santa Fe route into San Francisco was a sort of compromise between the water level route of the SP and the rather mountainous and indirect access (Niles Canyon) used by the Western Pacific. After passing the mammoth military installations of Port Chicago, the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF began a climb into the hills, leaving the narrow, congested bayside routing for a shortcut of its own through Franklin Canyon.

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Back through the coaches we walked. We had a load of about 65 people, perhaps half of whom were arrivals from out of state. There had been a certain amount of passenger traffic between points within the San Joaquin Valley, too, but by and large that traffic was limited because of the very early hour at which we hit the large towns of Bakersfield and Fresno.

We rolled into Richmond and stopped out in the middle of a large paved area. It was 9:50am; we were 10 minutes early. Two Santa Fe buses were waiting to take passengers to the various bay area destinations (Berkeley and Oakland passengers in one bus, S.F.-bound in the second). The train-to-bus transfer was handicapped by the rainfall and the lack of a rainshed, but we all managed to get on the proper bus. From its inception in 1954 up until 1959 this train operated on through Berkeley and into Oakland, with a bus to San Francisco only. The switch to Richmond was an economy move.

There were economy steps taken, of course, but there was nevertheless still a conscious effort to keep the service pleasing. The most notable by absence was the Courier-Nurse, long a crew member on this train. These girls, a combination hostess-nursemaid, were a welcome sight for old and young alike. They had been regular crew members on June 8, 1969, the date our brochure was issued. In the fall of that year, though, the girls were phased out and their passing was marked by a big solid bar of color across the brochure, blotting out the reference to the friendly Courier-Nurse.

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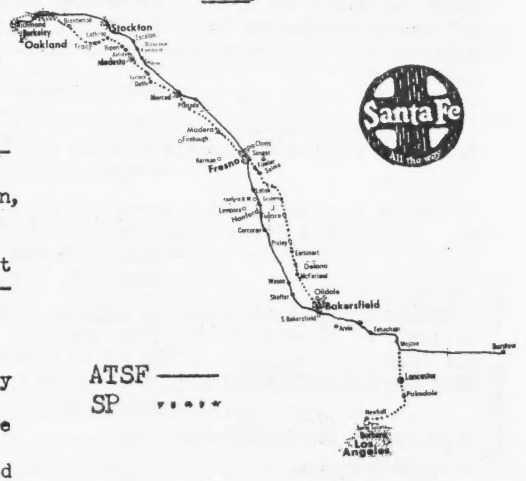

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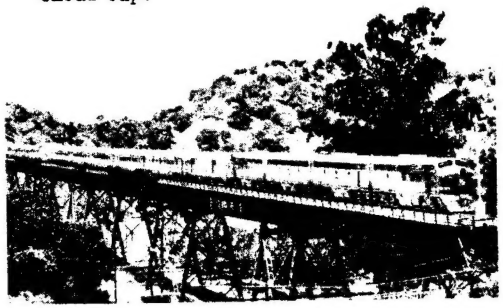

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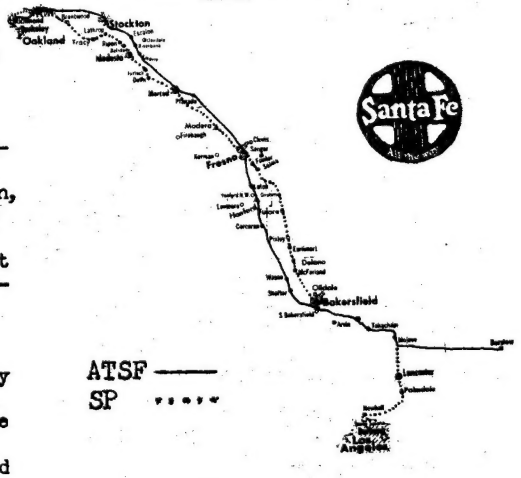

The San Joaquin Valley services of Santa Fe and SP were marked by many anomalies. For instance:

1) From Bakersfield to San Francisco there were no fewer than eight (ten, counting connections) cities with service by both railroads--and duplicate facilities in each and every one. Not once was there any cooperation either to make it more convenient for passengers or to cut costs.

2) The differences in equipment and accomodations were nothing short of radical.

3) The Santa Fe offered a family plan, allowing the wife to travel half fare (intrastate); none of that nonsense on the SP!

4) The maximum speed allowed on the two lines differed by a full 20 mph.

5) The Southern Pacific didn't know the meaning of the words "on time."

The discussion of variations could go on and on, but read my previous article on the SAN JOAQUIN DAYLIGHT to best get an appreciation for the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF.

By the time we rode the SF CHIEF, it was the only truly first class train serving the San Francisco area. It combined fine equipment with daily operation, a situation which could hardly be said to exist for its nearest competitor on the SP. The CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO hadn't seen a decent dining car menu in years, and only reluctantly carried a dome car.

Let it be noted that about eight months before Congress acted to preserve the dwindling passenger trains, it finally happened and the Santa Fe, too, filed for discontinuance of the SAN FRANCISCO CHIEF. Permission was denied, but even while seeking permission to discontinue, the Santa Fe was operating a finer train than the premier train of many another line.

In a later article I'll talk about this train again, describing the run from Kansas to New Mexico.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"The alternative to blacktopping the entire nation with highways and airports, as more and more people are coming to realize, is a revival of passenger trains.

... Congress should not only grant the funds (Amtrak is requesting) but should amend the law to improve Amtrak's chances of becoming profitable. In particular, it should require Amtrak to operate its own trains with its own crews. At present, the railroads run the trains and Amtrak reimburses their losses, an arrangement that gives the railroads no more incentive than in the past to keep their trains clean and punctual."

—Life Magazine editorial, Dec. 3

"Nobody rides trains these days. If it weren't for that one simple fact, the railroads themselves would still be in the passenger business."

--Forbes Magazine, Nov. 15

"Amtrak is a sentimental excursion into the past for legislators over 50. The trouble is, it's not going to be at an excursion rate."

--C&NW chairman Ben Heineman, quoted in Forbes Magazine, Nov. 15

"There are 50 auto trains in Europe; the one existing here hardly responds to demand. Even during the high summer season I can take my car from Paris to Milan or Madrid to Paris with a one-week reservation. Here one needs to book now for 1972—preposterous."

—Letter to New York Times, Nov. 28

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB ***

"BART's current hope is to open the Oakland-Fremont line next March. The official first rain would leave Fremont for Oakland after ribbon-cutting ceremonies."

—Oakland Tribune, Dec. 5

(Forget the weather. Just tell us when the first BART train will run.)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

SOUTHERN PACIFIC was granted a 10% commute train fare boost last month. A move that will drive away more commuters. SP has repeatedly spurned offers of public assistance for the trains..... TEXAS CHIEF leaving Houston Nov. 23 at 7:30am suffered a minor derailment; no injuries.....

BE PATIENT, fellow West Coasters looking for new equipment. It's taking time to move it around the country. But it's moving. Witness: the LAKE SHORE was due to get domes from the West, but when they arrived they wouldn't meet clearances at Syracuse and Rochester. Now Amtrak is trying to assign C&O domes that will clear. It's a mammoth undertaking to make all the shifts of cars over the nation and undoubtedly errors and delays will happen..... AFTER CHRISTMAS season the diner will come off the EL CAPITAN, leaving the first class SUPER CHIEF diner to serve the train in off season. It has cut its dinner entree selection from four to two, plus the champagne dinner that's still there but who knows for how long..... DISTURBING RUMOR has it that the SUPER CHIEF's dome with Turquoise Room will be moved from its fine parent train to the SUNSET LIMITED..... SAUSALITO, CALIF. once was bustling NWP train center. On Thanksgiving (Nov. 25) the NWP line there was formally abandoned. Last freight movement was on the 24th..... WALNUT CREEK, Calif.'s 70-yr old SP station will be moved and converted into a restaurant..... SANTA CLAUS SPECIAL has run 14 yrs between Monterey and Pacific Grove, Calif., but no more, thanks to the demise of the DEL MONTE last May 1..... COAST-STARLIGHT-is-still-running-late Dept: latest observation by Robert J. Swan Nov. 28 saw it 1½ hrs late southbd on the SAN DIEGAN route..... SUNSET LTD., Amtrak train #2, during Oct. & Nov. had two on-time arrivals at San Antonio, out of 26 "tries." More details next issue..... "I'M BROKEN--FIX ME" stickers are sent free for a stamped envelope from Committee for Better Transit, Box 3106, Long Island City, NY 11103..... HAMBURGER GRILL cars are a great improvement over automats on the COAST DAYLIGHT. Hamburger as low as 85¢, several meals about $2, with sitdown service tho in rather spartan surroundings..... COAST STARLIGHT, besides being late 2 out of 3 times, is now running without a lounge due to equipment movements..... LOOK FOR new Amtrak routes to Canada and Mexico next year, plus Springfield-Albany, Pittsburgh-Cleveland, Los Angeles-Ogden, and a connection between SUPER CHIEF and CITY routes, either La Junta-Denver or Kansas City-Omaha..... DAVID P. MORGAN got the same shaking-up your editor did on the CITY east of Denver, and in the same car: UP's Pacific Plateau. But it wasn't the car, it was BN's track causing what Morgan termed the "gallop," "bounce," "sway," and "bang." His story runs in the Jan. Trains Magazine..... NEXT RTN: our holiday issue with a unique cover, a first, we believe, in railroading, that will bring new depth to trains.

LETTERS

Congratulations on the completion of a year of publishing RTN.

Each issue has been refreshing in its layout and vast amount of news and other information. ...

Good luck for the future and I hope that ten and even twenty years from now you will be receiving congratulations on these anniversaries.

Gene Theleen

San Francisco, Calif.

(Mr. Theleen wrote us our first letter, published in RTN no.1. Thank you, Mr. Theleen, for your kind words and your continued support. — Ed.)

Your coverage of the most important American railroad development, Amtrak, is no doubt the most comprehensive gathering of information outside 955 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.!

Being but 14, and living in a city where the only way to get anywhere is by car, I am hampered at all sides by my desire to see Amtrak firsthand.

Matthew J. Miles

San Pedro, Calif.

Reader's Questionnaire Coupon (see pages 2 and 15)
Mail to: RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley, Calif. 94709
What changes would you like to see in RTN?

Would you pay more for RTN if necessary to effect these changes?

Name, address:

COMMUTING AND RAPID TRANSIT

Strike May Cause Another Delay in BART Opening

Rohr Industries of Chula Vista, California, builders of rail cars for BART, was struck by a machinist union Nov. 29 and as of this writing no settlement is in sight. A prolonged tieup will delay the March opening date of the new rapid transit system.

NARP Recommends Choice of Rapid Transit or Automobile Quotas

A commuter train authority is needed in Washington D.C., said Joseph Vranich, executive director of NARP, before an air pollution control hearing Nov. 30. But since Maryland and Virginia don't seem to be interested in the needed joint effort by their states and D.C. officials, it might be necessary to place a quota on the number of autos per hour permitted to enter Washington from those states. This, said Vranich, "will jolt Annapolis and Richmond into the realization" that their lopsided transportation policies hurt the District and are no longer welcome.

Maryland, for example, has said that it can't put up the $2.7 million needed for its 65-mile commuter rail network, while it is pushing to build 5 miles of Interstate 95 at a cost of $73 million.

Likewise, Virginia, while building a one-mile stretch of the same road near the Pentagon at a cost of $51.6 million, is reluctant to spend only $1.6 million for its 38-mile share of the rail line.

D.C. would contribute $1.5 million for the commuter plan, and the rest, $11.6 million, would come from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation.

Washington's Metro System Clears a Hurdle

Freeway advocate Rep. William Natcher of Kentucky has for some time successfully held up release of $72 million for continued construction of the new 98-mile subway-surface Metro system in Washington D.C. But early this month the House voted to override his subcommittee's freeze. Natcher, who held tight the funds because of resistance to completion of several Interstate highway segments in the Washington area, will still be battling Metro in pending legislation, report his aides.

New York Fare May Rise to 35¢

After the defeat of New York's transit bond issue in the November election, other means have been sought to meet expenses of N.Y.C.'s transit system. On Dec. 4 Gov. Rockefeller announced he would call for a 35¢ fare effective Jan. 1. The plan will go to a special session of the state Legislature, and will include increased bridge and tunnel tolls and a bid for a $100-million Federal grant to the city. Some city council leaders, however, indicated that they will press to maintain the present 30¢ fare.

decisions about the content, size, mechanics, etc., of the newsletter. Should we continue to send it by first class mail? The cost of doing so has risen 33% in the past year, but we've held the line on our subscription rate. By some minor printing innovations we've managed to improve the newsletter while holding costs down. If necessary, would you pay more for RTN in order to keep the advantage of first class delivery?

A coupon adjoins this editorial for your convenience in replying to such questions and adding other comments. If you don't want to cut up your issue, write on a separate sheet. Please may we hear from you soon?

the philosophical newsletter

Just what is RTN anyway? In our first issue we explained in our first editorial that we would not explain the purposes of RTN, since the imminence of "Railpax" would make our words superfluous. But over the period of a year--indeed, after an issue or two--our philosophy and aims were mostly apparent.

Call RTN a consumer newsletter if you will. In simplest terms, our primary concern is that the consumer of American travel facilities have access to services that serve him properly as a human being. We are concerned with the dignity of the human individual in an age of bureaucracy and machine control over human lives. We believe that transportation is one of the major issues of our time. It is one of the few aspects of modern society that touches upon nearly every person every day of his life. We feel that our imbalanced transportation system has wrought severe discomforts upon millions of Americans, and we are convinced that a renaissance of rail travel is one of the requirements in restoring sanity to our ways of travel.

We are opposed to the inflicting of indignities upon human individuals, and especially upon the human traveler, whether they be inflicted by corporate bureaucracy, by government bureaucracy, or by any other source. We are talking about indignities that range from needless highway deaths to rudeness by conductors. We are opposed to them all.

We are not anti-Amtrak, as a few readers have felt. Neither are we pressing to nationalize the railroads tomorrow, as others believed. We support the concept of Amtrak. We aim to publicize the corporation, and by criticism both positive and negative (when necessary) to try to help it prosper. We support the Auto-Train venture and any other promising private ventures into rail service. We strongly support the National Association of Railroad Passengers and we encourage all to join that organization. We speak independently of NARP, however, and urge readers not to hold NARP responsible for any overly radical ideas we may from time to time toss out.

the humorous newsletter

Finally we come to one of the main reasons for initiating RTN. We felt that rail travelers have been oppressed for so long that they have lost their sense of humor. Every rail publication we picked up seemed either too ponderous or too depressing. We felt that IT'S TIME FOR RAIL TRAVELERS TO SMILE AGAIN. Accordingly, we've tried to make RTN lighthearted. Perhaps we've succeeded, since one reader has called RTN a "fun newsletter." Remember, fellow underdog, that someone once said that humor is the best weapon of the underdog.

As we gaze upon that preliminary Railpax map on the cover of RTN no. 1, we think now what an insult it was to the intelligence of Americans. We've come quite a long way since then, but have even farther to go. Will you be with us as we laugh our way into the new rail travel renaissance?